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Watchdog Group Cries Foul over Gov's Budget Comments



An Arizona watch-dog group is taking issue with comments from the governor about what the state treasurer knows and doesn't know.

While speaking of the state's financial crisis, Governor Napolitano said that state Treasurer Dean Martin didn't have access to all of the info needed to assess the state's financial situation.

"His graphs are based on incomplete information. They have to be because he just simply doesn't have access to the information that one would have to have," said the governor.

Byron Schlomack with the Goldwater Institute says the state treasurer has to know about all of the state's money, including reserves, otherwise the governor is breaking the law.

"We're talking about a much bigger issue here than just two politicians fighting. We're talking about whether taxpayer money is going to be spent in a smoke-filled back room or in the open. We're talking about the integrity of the state," says Schlomack.

He says it's essential that the state's spending records being made available. "The treasurer is supposed to know about every dime in the state. If the governor knows something the treasurer doesn't, then she needs to come clean on it."

Schlomack says if the governor is hiding slush funds, she's breaking the law. He's also concerned about what he describes as a lack of transparency when it comes to the state's spending.

As for the current budget shortfall, he says it's a situation that's fast spiraling out of control, with no apparent solution in sight.

Hanna Scott/KTAR